

Nadler: Repeal of Affordable Care Act Would Be Catastrophic for American People and U.S. Economy

Tuesday, 18 January 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), a passionate advocate for health care reform, spoke on the House floor in fierce opposition to H.R. 2, the Patients Rights Repeal Act, the product of Republican efforts to repeal the landmark Affordable Care Act.

"Repeal of the Affordable Care Act would be catastrophic for the American people and for our economy," said Nadler. "Instead of spending our time looking for ways to build on and perfect the health care reform law, Republicans want to take a sledgehammer to it, to throw out everything, without any consideration at all. No matter that our economy still needs our attention. No matter that millions of Americans remain out of work."

The following is the text of Nadler's statement, as prepared:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Republican effort to deny 32 million Americans health care, to deny millions of middle-class Americans the ability to get health care insurance if they have pre-existing conditions, and to drive up our national debt by an additional \$1.4 trillion over the next 20 years.

"Last March, I had the distinct pleasure and honor of voting for the Affordable Care Act, which achieves many of the goals I have been fighting for my entire adult life.

"The Affordable Care Act laid the groundwork to stave off the 55 percent of personal bankruptcies caused by health care emergencies. By banning rescissions, banning the 'pre-existing conditions' insurance bar, banning annual and lifetime coverage caps, and capping annual out-of-pocket expenses, this law ensures that nobody will go broke because they get sick.

"When fully implemented, more than 32 million additional Americans will have access to health care coverage. This translates into saving the lives of approximately 45,000 Americans annually, who now die because they lack health insurance.

"In addition, the Affordable Care Act extends greater rights and benefits to women. No longer can insurance companies discriminate against women by charging women higher rates than men for the same coverage. No longer will women be denied coverage because insurance companies consider pregnancy, C-sections, and being the victim of domestic violence to be pre-existing conditions. No longer will women go without critical maternity care coverage, access to mammograms, and other key preventive care services - services that will be available without co-pays and deductibles. Ending these routine, disgraceful, and patently unfair practices are a tremendous victory for women and children.

"For America's seniors, the Affordable Care Act strengthens the Medicare program. Seniors will no longer pay out of pocket for preventive services; and the cruel donut hole, which forces seniors to choose between taking their drugs or going without, will be closed. And by cracking down on fraud and waste, the Act ensures that those who seek to take advantage of our seniors and steal from the Medicare program will no longer have a free ride.

"The Affordable Care Act also benefits America's young people. Often without the option of employer-based health insurance, young people now can stay on their parents' health plans until their 26th birthday.

"And owners of small businesses will get billions of dollars in tax credits to help them provide health coverage to their employees - unless, of course, the Republicans are successful in enacting a massive tax increase on small businesses by repealing this law.

"We did all this and more while reducing the deficit by what CBO now estimates will be \$230 billion in the first 10 years, and \$1.2 trillion in the next 10 years.

"Mr. Speaker, when our predecessors passed similarly historic laws such as Social Security in 1935 and Medicare and Medicaid in 1965, they knew the measures would require further consideration. In the years since those crucially important programs were signed into law, Congress has made, and will continue to make, improvements to those programs. And that is the key - to make improvements to the law. Instead of spending our time looking for ways to build on and perfect the health care reform law, Republicans want to take a sledgehammer to it, to throw out everything, without any consideration at all. No matter that our economy still needs our attention. No matter that millions of Americans remain out of work.

"For all of these reasons, I strongly encourage my colleagues to vote NO on this misguided bill."

###